

A Dictionary of Biblical Allusions in Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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Ball State University

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June 2015

Date of Graduation

May 2015

Under
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ABSTRACT AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Abstract

Biblical allusions resonate in Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*. Momaday is masterful at augmenting his writing with both explicit and ambiguous references. Unfortunately, a cataloging of biblical allusions within this classic text has yet to be completed. This volume of two hundred and twenty-six allusions is an attempt to remedy this deficiency. The references are compiled in dictionary format in the order they appear in the text. Its purpose is to present the biblical brilliance of Momaday's classic novel.

Acknowledgments

My sincere gratitude goes to Dr. Gilman for advising me throughout this project and for first suggesting a dictionary of biblical allusions in Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*. Staying with you for three semesters of Honors Humanities is one of the best decisions I have ever made. Kind regards go to the Honors College for allowing an economics and finance major write a thesis immersed in Scripture. Many allusion explanations were improved by the advise of Andrew, Rev. Bob, Rev. Brian, Cody, Jacob and Josh. Thank you all for taking the time to respond to my questions. I am forever indebted to my parents for giving me the capacity to discover Momaday's many allusions to Scripture. Thank you for raising me in knowledge of the Word. Further appreciation goes to my sister, the better writer in the family. Finally, this thesis would be nothing if not for the divine Author of Scripture, "*since He Himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything*" (Acts 17:25). Soli Deo gloria.

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I. INTRODUCTION

N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* (1968) is undoubtedly the most historic work of Native American literature. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1969, *House Made of Dawn* exposed Native American literature as a literary genre in its own right. This important reality has led many to believe that Momaday's classic is most significant for its use of Native American prose and allusions. Whereas Momaday is brilliant at the former, he is equally as brilliant in alluding to Scripture, both Old and New Testament alike.

Momaday's classic tells the story of Abel. Born on the Navajo reservation in New Mexico, Abel is torn between his Native American roots and the Christian tradition, mainly that of Roman Catholicism. The novel is indeed autobiographical as Momaday himself is of Kiowa descent and was also born on the reservation. Polarized between the traditions of their ancestors and Christianity, the two stumble along.

Momaday's text is, therefore, a poetic narrative that depicts the crisis of identity and the search for spiritual happiness. Employing images from Native American traditions as well as Church traditions and biblical writings, he expresses the ambiguities of Abel's self-identity in a world of competing worldviews. Navajo and Kiowa beliefs and cultural perspectives are integral to an appreciation of this theme of Abel's "coming of age," and research is required in this area. However, Judaic Christian traditions play an equally relevant role in this text, and it is hoped that this thesis may serve as a research tool to enunciate the richness and complexity of this narrative.

This reference work has documented a total of two hundred and twenty-six biblical allusions. Momaday skillfully uses Scripture by referring to it in various ways. In some passages he explicitly uses Scripture by writing out precise biblical texts (e.g., Fray Nicolás' journal entries). In other passages he refers to Scripture in a more ambiguous fashion, and this is the

form that makes up the majority of his allusions. For example, he articulates characters in the likeness of biblical characters (e.g., the young Indian brave as Jesus), but he also engages in image-engineering by creating characters in the reverse image of biblical characters (e.g., Momaday's Abel alludes to Adam's Abel, but instead of being murdered, Momaday's Abel murders). He writes stories that allude to the fulfillment of decrees from Scripture (e.g., Hebrews 13:2 and the story of Santiago and the poor old man and his wife). He also combines his vast knowledge of both the Native American and Christian traditions in order to refer to both ambiguously (e.g., the Priest of the Sun). These are only a few examples of Momaday's brilliant use of Scripture.

Since readers have not yet recognized the significant use of biblical allusions in *House Made of Dawn*, this catalogue of allusions in dictionary format may prove useful in appreciating Momaday's text more fully. The dictionary lists the allusions in the order they appear in the text. Within each entry is an explanation for the biblical nature of the reference. All Scripture citations within an entry's explanation are in italics. The italicization of each reference is given for emphasis and is not in Momaday's text. References marked with an asterisk (*) are not direct biblical allusions but rather refer to a historical Church figure or an object/tradition that the Church has formed over time. Full underlining is for explicit citations of Scripture within Momaday's text; dotted underlining is for explicit biblical paraphrase. In regards to the citation of Scripture, it is apparent that Momaday makes use of the King James Version (KJV). Therefore, for each explicit biblical citation the dictionary uses the KJV. However, the dictionary relies on and cites primarily the New American Standard Bible. In addition to its faithfulness to the original meaning of the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts, this translation's use of modern English compiles more closely to the English used by Momaday and is more readable than the

KJV. All allusion citations and page references conform to the text, N. Scott Momaday, *House Made of Dawn* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).

II. DICTIONARY OF BIBLICAL ALLUSIONS

Note: (1) All Scripture citations are from the New American Standard Bible unless noted by the King James Version (KJV).^{1, 2} (2) References to the “Church” without any other word association are referring to the catholic or universal Church.

1) “*Abel was running...Abel was running...Abel was running*” (pp. 1 and 2, mentioned also on pp. 49 (“*Yes Lord yes yes yes*”), 73 (“*Padre! Padre! Padre!*”), 89 (“*The moon, the moon, the moon*”) and 102 (“*Yes, yes, yes... Word by word by word*”)).

Momaday’s use of triple repetition suggests the cherubim’s trihagion and Israel’s common use of triple repetition for emphasis.³ Around the throne of God the cherubim cry “*Holy, Holy, Holy*” forever and ever (Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8).

2) “*Every six or seven years there is a great harvest of piñones far to the east of the town. That harvest, like the deer in the mountains, is the gift of God*” (p. 6).

A great harvest on the seventh year conveys Israel’s year of Jubilee. As a gift to His people, God establishes and arranges Jubilee: “*You are also to count off seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years, so that you have the time of the seven sabbaths of years, namely, forty-nine years. You shall then sound a ram’s horn abroad on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the day of atonement you shall sound a horn all through your land. You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall*

¹ *New American Standard Bible*. La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation, 1995. Print.

² *The Authorized Version of the Bible (King James Version)*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1769. Print.

³ “What Does It Mean That God Is Holy, Holy, Holy” *Got Questions Ministries*. gotquestions.org, n.d. Web. 22 April 2015.

return to his family. You shall have the fiftieth year as a jubilee; you shall not sow, nor reap its aftergrowth, nor gather in from its untrimmed vines. For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you. You shall eat its crops out of the field. On this year of jubilee each of you shall return to his own property... You shall thus observe My statutes and keep My judgments, so as to carry them out, that you may live securely on the land. Then the land will yield its produce, so that you can eat your fill and live securely on it” (Lev. 25:8-13, 18-19).

3) *“Francisco held his stride all the way to the Middle” (p. 8).*

The area of the village named “the Middle” is indicative of Scripture’s geographical location. The biblical middle is the Middle East, the area in which nearly all its stories take place. Momaday continues to refer to “the Middle” throughout the novel (e.g., pp. 40, 78, 80 and 197).

4) *“That year he killed seven bucks and seven does...He had come about seven miles” (p. 8,* mentioned also on pp. 6 (*“every six or seven years”*), 51 (*“once he fell in the river & was no more than 6 or 7”*), 90 (*“it stood seven or eight inches above the floor”*), 131 (*“eight children were there to play, seven sisters and their brother”*), 132 (*“she was about seven years old”*), 194 (*“in seven years he had grown calm with duty and design”*), 198 (*“six days ahead of the black bull running and the little horse dancing, seven ahead of the Pecos immigration”*) and 209 (*“before the first light should break in advance of the seventh dawn”*)).

Momaday’s significant use of the number seven reflects God’s significant use of seven throughout Scripture. At the novel’s beginning, Francisco drives about seven miles to pick up the weary and drunk Abel. At Scripture’s beginning, God uses six days to create everything, and then rests on the seventh day (Gen. 2:1-3). At the novel’s end, Francisco dies before the seventh

dawn. At Scripture's end, angels pour seven bowls of annihilating wrath out over the earth (Rev. 16:1-21). The holy day, the Sabbath, is designed to take place on the seventh day (Exod. 20:10). Therefore, Father Olguin's feelings of calm and design are right to occur after seven years of duty. Furthermore, in both the novel and Scripture, seven is juxtaposed between six and eight. The number of the Antichrist is one less than 7 at 666 (Rev. 13:18). Jewish males are circumcised on the eighth day, one more than seven (Lev. 12:3).

5) "*He did not know who his father was*" (p. 11).

Abel's lack of knowledge of his father alludes to biblical misfortune. In Christianity, if one does not know God the Son, then one cannot know God the Father since the "*[Son] and the Father are one*" (John 10:30). This ignorance causes one to walk in spiritual darkness (John 8:12). Thus, from a biblical viewpoint, Abel's future missteps and miseries are understandable since he is ignorant of his father.

6) "*He had seen a strange thing, an eagle overhead with its talons closed upon a snake. It was an awful, holy sight, full of magic and meaning*" (pp. 14-15).

The female eagle implies the woman with "*two wings of the great eagle*" in the revelation to the Apostle John (Rev. 12:14). The snake signifies "*the Serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan*" (Rev. 20:2). The Serpent first appears in Genesis as Eve's tempter (see reference #8).

7) "*She carried a rattlesnake; it hung shining from her feet...she began to beat upward at an angle from the rim until she was small in the sky, and she let go of the snake. It fell*" (p. 18).

The eagle's hold on the snake and subsequent letting go is reminiscent of the "*angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the Serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him*" (Rev. 20:1-3).

8) "*Then suddenly he gathered himself and stooped, sliding down in a blur of motion to the strike. He hit the snake in the head, with not the slightest deflection of his course or speed, cracking its long body like a whip*" (p. 18).

The hitting of the snake's head by the male eagle is an allusion to the biblical gospel. Immediately, following the Fall in Eden, God promises the Serpent, "*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel*" (Gen. 3:15). So goes Scripture's first declaration of the good news of Jesus Christ: Satan bruises Jesus on the cross, but He then cripples him upon defeating death three days later. Jesus is now "*alive forevermore [and holds] the keys of death and of Hades*" (Rev. 1:18). At the end of time He will pour upon Satan the "*eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels*" (Matt. 25:41). The Serpent will soon be crushed under the feet of all Christians (Rom. 16:20).

9) "*Before the middle of the last century, there was received into the population of the town a small group of immigrants from the Tanoan city of Bahkyula, a distance of seventy or eighty miles to the east. These immigrants were a wretched people, for they had experienced great*

suffering. Their land bordered upon the Southern Plains, and for many years they had been an easy mark for marauding bands of buffalo hunters and thieves” (p. 15).

The suffering and sojourning of the Bahkyush echoes the suffering and sojourning of Israel. After experiencing great suffering while slaves for 430 years to the Egyptians, God redeems Israel and sends them sojourning to the promised land of Canaan (Exod. 6:6; 12:40). However, this allusion is only partial since Israel is going back “*into the land which [their] fathers possessed*” and not into a foreign land as are the Bahkyula (Deut. 30:5).

10) *“The Eagle Watchers Society was the principle ceremonial organization of the Bahkyush. Its chief, Patiestewa, and all its members were direct descendants of those old men and women who had made that journey along the edge of oblivion” (p. 16).*

The Eagles Watchers Society alludes to Israel’s tribe of Levi. The Levites were consecrated as the only tribe able to perform the priestly activities associated with the Mosaic Law (Num. 18:1-7). Members of the tribe were the direct descendants of Levi, one of the twelve sons of Jacob (Gen. 29:34).

11) *“They were gone for days, holding up here and there at the holy places where they must pray and make their offerings” (p. 19).*

The eagle watcher’s nomadism denotes Israel’s use of the tabernacle. Before Solomon’s temple was built in Jerusalem, Israel met with and offered sacrifices to God in a makeshift tabernacle. The tabernacle, whether here or there, was the holy place for Israel since God Himself dwelled there (Exod. 40:34-38; 1 Chron. 17:1). The Levites were in charge of administering the offerings in the tabernacle (Num. 18:21).

12) *"He went to the river and washed his head in order to purify himself"* (p. 20).

The requirement of an eagle watcher to wash with water, before killing a rabbit, suggests the Levitical requirement of washing one's self with water upon entering the tabernacle (Exod. 30:19-21).

13) *"Only when it was too late did he remember to look back in the direction of the fields"* (p. 23).

Looking back to where one is coming from brings to mind the disobedience of Lot's wife. She disobeys two angels by remembering to look back at the punished Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:15-26). Consequently, she becomes a pillar of salt.

14) *"There were men about, the bodies of men; he could barely see them strewn among the pits, their limbs sprawling away into the litter of leaves"* (p. 24).

The machine coming towards the wounded Abel and scores of dead soldiers is parallel to Jesus the Messiah coming into a sinful earth.

15) *"Someone, some human force far away and out of sight, was making way for the machine that was coming"* (p. 24).

The human force making way for the machine implies the man who prepares the way for Jesus: *"As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: 'Behold, I send My messenger ahead of You, who will prepare Your way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, make His paths straight''"* (Mark 1:2-3; cf., Mal. 3:1). This foretold messenger is John the

Baptist. As the last Old Testament prophet, he is the “*voice of one crying in the wilderness*” and is to “*make straight the way of the Lord*” (John 1:23).

16) “*Then, through the falling leaves, he saw the machine. It rose up behind the hill, black and massive, looming there in front of the sun...for a moment it seemed apart from the land*” (p. 25).

The machine’s qualities are indicative of the qualities of Jesus. The God-Man appears apart from the earth since He is the Son (Heb. 4:14; Matt. 16:16). In fact, as Jesus declares to the Jews, “*You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world*” (John 8:23).

17)* “*It was a feast of martyrs*” (p. 26).

In the Roman Catholic Church a feast of martyrs is a day dedicated to a martyred saint.

18)* “*Father Olguin took down the scarlet chasuble from its place in the wardrobe*” (p. 26).

During a feast of martyrs, the priest must wear a scarlet chasuble while performing Mass. A chasuble is the priest’s outermost vestment.

19)* “*It was cold and dark in the sacristy*” (p. 27).

The priest’s vestments are stored in a room next to the sanctuary called the sacristy.

20)* “*A small, sleepy boy whose name was Bonifacio stood in the corner, putting on a faded red cassock*” (p. 27).

The boy's name suggests Saint Boniface (A.D. ca. 675-754). As a layperson assisting with Mass, Bonifácio must wear a cassock.

21) *"He turned and took up the chalice"* (p. 27).

A chalice is the cup used to hold the wine of communion. See reference #23.

22)* *"Followed Bonifácio out to the altar"* (p. 27).

See reference #20. Mass is offered upon an altar table.

23) *"Sacrament"* (p. 27).

A sacrament is a visible sign of an invisible divine grace and is often referred to as a means of grace. Roman Catholics recognize seven sacraments: Baptism, Communion/Eucharist, Confirmation, Penance, Anointing the Sick, Matrimony and Holy Orders. Protestants recognize only Baptism and Communion as sacraments.

24) *"The sacrament of communion"* (p. 27).

The sacrament of Communion is the Lord's Supper. Jesus first administers this sacrament during his last supper before his crucifixion (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-23).

The Apostle Paul recalls: *"For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and*

drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Cor. 11:23-26). Within Christianity there are four main viewpoints on the actual manifestation at the Lord's Table: Transubstantiation by Roman Catholics, Consubstantiation by Lutherans, Real Presence by the Reformed, and Memorial by Baptists. Theologians have debated these viewpoints for centuries.

25) *"The woman did not receive the sacrament of communion"* (p. 27).

By abstaining from the Lord's Supper, Angela is alluding to her possible denial of Christianity. Communion is only for Christians and therefore should not be partaken of by non-Christians. For *"whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord "* (1 Cor. 11:27). Angela is evidently aware of the Apostle Paul's decree.

26) *"I am Mrs. Martin St. John"* (p. 27).

Angela's last name refers to John, the son of Zebedee and brother of the Apostle James (Mark 10:35). John is an Apostle and one of the original twelve close disciples of Jesus of Nazareth (Matt. 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:13-16). He authored the five Johannine works of the New Testament: the Gospel according to John, the First Epistle of John, the Second Epistle of John, the Third Epistle of John, and the Revelation to John. He is referred to as Saint John the Evangelist.

27) *"Martin wanted me to try the mineral baths. I have had soreness in my back for several weeks. They say that the spring water is very healthful"* (p. 28).

The spring water is reminiscent of Bethesda: *“Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes. In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, [waiting for the moving of the waters; for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.] A man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years”* (John 5:2-5). Jesus heals the ill man (John 5:8-9).

28)* *“I can ask the sacristan”* (p. 30, mentioned also on pp. 48, 51, 77 and 205).

A sacristan is a man who keeps the sacristy. See reference #19.

29) *“In the noon and early afternoon there was no sign of life in the town....At this hour of the day, especially, the town seemed to disappear into the earth. Everything in the valley inclined to the color of dust”* (p. 30).

The village appears on the verge of returning to dust, as Scripture proclaims, *“All came from dust and all return to dust”* (Eccles. 3:20). Returning to dust is one of the curses of the Fall in Eden: *“You are dust, and to dust you shall return”* (Gen. 3:19).

30) *“Abel came to the Benevides house on Tuesday. He would cut the wood for three dollars. Angela St. John had been prepared to bargain, but there was no indulgence in him, no concession to trade; he had simply, once and for all, shut her off. It remained for her to bring about a vengeance. She smiled and looked down from an upstairs window as he chopped the wood”* (p. 31).

This episode between Angela and Abel is analogous to the Genesis 39 incident between Potiphar's wife and Joseph, the son of Jacob. Potiphar's wife wants to have sexual relations with Joseph. However, Joseph will not indulge in this affair since he desires to honor Potiphar, his master, who has given him everything—except his wife. Joseph declares that this affair would be a “*great evil and sin against God*” (Gen. 39:9). Potiphar's wife, however, seeks vengeance and has Joseph thrown into prison.

31) “*She would have her bath and read from the lives of saints*” (p. 32).

Angela's reading from the lives of saints is a common habit among Christians. This type of reading stirs up faith by the recollection of faith in times past. Scripture's renowned passage of faith is Hebrews eleven. The epistle's author describes the faith of saints of old: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets (Heb. 11:4-40). Faith is “*the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen; for by it the men of old gained approval*” (Heb. 11:1-2). Hebrews eleven is commonly referred to as the Hall of Faith.

32)* “*Tomorrow is the feast of Santiago*” (p. 36).

In the Roman Catholic Church feast days are set apart for the remembrance of particular saints. The Feast of Santiago, or the Feast of Saint James, occurs on the twenty-fifth of July and is dedicated to celebrating the life and deeds of James, the son of Zebedee and brother of the Apostle John (Mark 10:35). James is an Apostle and one of the original twelve close disciples of Jesus of Nazareth (Matt. 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:13-16). He is referred to as Saint James the Greater and is the Patron Saint of Spain and Portugal.

33) *"Santiago rode southward into Mexico. Although his horse was sleek and well bred, he himself was dressed in the guise of a peon. When he had journeyed a long way, he stopped to rest at the house of an old man and his wife. They were poor and miserable people, but they were kind and gracious, too, and they bade Santiago welcome. They gave him cold water to slake his thirst and cheerful words to comfort him. There was nothing in the house to eat; but a single, aged rooster strutted back and forth in the yard. The rooster was their only possession of value, but the old man and woman killed and cooked it for their guest. That night they gave him their bed while they slept on the cold ground. When morning came, Santiago told them who he was"* (p. 38).

The story of the stranger Santiago—himself alluding to Saint James (see reference #32), a person probably revered more than the angels—and the poor old man and his wife recalls two passages of Scripture: *"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it"; "[Jesus] sat down opposite the treasury, and began observing how the people were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent. Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, 'Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on'"* (Heb. 13:2; Mark 12:41-44).

34) *"That day the king proclaimed that there should be a great celebration and many games, dangerous contests of skill and strength. Santiago entered the games. He was derided at first, for everyone supposed him to be a peon and a fool. But he was victorious, and as a prize he was allowed to choose and marry one of the king's daughters"* (p. 38).

Santiago's prize and victory are analogous to Othniel's prize and victory: "*And Caleb said, 'The one who attacks Kiriath-sepher and captures it, I will give him Achsah my daughter as a wife.'* Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, captured it; so he gave him Achsah his daughter as a wife" (Josh. 15:16-17). Santiago's prize-giver is a king as opposed to Othniel's prize-giver, Caleb, who is not king. Othniel, however, eventually becomes Israel's first ruling Judge (Judg. 3:9-11).

35) "*The rooster warned him...the horse spoke to him*" (p. 39).

Santiago encounters two talking animals in a rooster and horse. Scripture also tells of two talking animals: the Serpent in the Garden of Eden and Balaam's donkey (Gen. 3:1-5; Num. 22:28-30; cf., 2 Pet. 2:15-16).

36) "*It was then her eyes were drawn to the heavy, bloodless hand at the throat of the bird*" (p. 44).

The albino's handling of the sacrificial bird is comparable to God's instructions regarding Israel's liturgical order for burnt offerings: "*He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering*" (Lev. 1:4).

37) "*The bird was dead, and still he swung it down and across, and the neck of the bird was broken and the flesh torn open*" (p. 44).

The bird's suffering by the hand of the albino implies Jesus' crucifixion sufferings by the hand of the Father: "*But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would render Himself as a guilt offering*" (Isa. 53:10).

38) *"And the blood splashed everywhere about"* (p. 44).

This text suggests the outcome of a priest's liturgical actions during a Levitical offering:
"In the place where they slay the burnt offering they are to slay the guilt offering, and he shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar" (Lev. 7:2).

39) *"The feathers and flesh and entrails of the bird were scattered about on the ground... Here and there the townswomen threw water to finish it in sacrifice"* (p. 45).

"Its entrails, however, and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall offer up in smoke all of it on the altar for a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD" (Lev. 1:9, cf., 13).

40) *"The dogs crept near and crouched, and it was finished"* (p. 45).

"Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit" (John 19:30). These are Jesus' last words before his sacrifice for human sin is finished.

41) *"María bear-HEE-nay et OMO FATUOUS"* (p. 47).

Fray Nicolás is mispronouncing the Latin "María Virgine et homo factus" meaning "virgin Mary and was made." He takes this directly from the Nicene Creed (A.D. 381): "Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex María Virgine et homo factus est" meaning "He was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man." The Creed is depicting Christ's incarnation: *"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy*

Spirit” (Matt. 1:18; cf., Luke 1:35; Isa. 7:14). Nicolás’ mispronunciation is intentional as it alludes to the young Indian brave born of a “bear-HEE-nay” and a maiden (see reference #199). However, Nicolás is a clever fool for “fatuous,” meaning “inanely foolish,” is a distortion of Christian theology. The incarnation of the Son is definitely not inanely foolish, as the angels declare of the newborn King, “‘*Glory to God in the highest*’” (Luke 2:14).

42) “*With Thine Almighty help*” (p. 47).

“Thine Almighty” refers to God, “*the Almighty*” (Rev. 1:8). Likewise it is written that, “Thine Almighty word leaped down from heaven” (Wisd. of Sol. 18:15 KJV). However, the Church has never recognized Wisdom of Solomon as canonical Scripture since it is part of the Apocrypha. But, as a Roman Catholic, Fray Nicolás is more likely to believe otherwise.

43) “*He will be ready next month to sing Thee the Glory of Thy Birth*” (p. 47).

“Thee the Glory of Thy Birth” is sung concerning the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem.

44) “*Thou hast said to me Nicolás thy whole life thou art the midwife of My Coming. Yes & I await Thee still*” (p. 47).

This phrase conveys either Jesus’ first coming as an innocent child to Bethlehem or His second coming as the warring King on a white horse (Acts 1:11; Rev. 19:11-16; see reference #41). Nicolás waits “*looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus*” (Titus 2:13).

45) "But if one among thee asks his father for a loaf will he hand him a stone? Or for a fish will he for a fish hand him a serpent? Or if he asks for an egg will he hand him a scorpion?" (p. 47).

"If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?" (Luke 11:11-12 KJV; cf., Matt. 7:9-10).

46) "Commend her wretched soul to Thee" (p. 47).

Fray Nicolás' words of commendation to Tomacita Fragua, at her deathbed, recall Stephen's when he *"called on the Lord and said, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!'"* while being stoned as the first Christian martyr (Acts 7:59). Similarly, while dying on the cross, Jesus cries, *"Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit"* (Luke 23:46 KJV) He is quoting David from the thirty-first Psalm: *"Into Thine hand I commit my spirit"* (Ps. 31:5 KJV).

47) "Watch ye therefore for ye know neither the day nor the hour" (pp. 47-48).

The Apostle Matthew records Jesus as saying, *"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh"* (Matt. 25:13 KJV). Mark, a disciple of the Apostle Peter, records, *"Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping"* (Mark 13:35-36 KJV). Jesus is referring to the unknown time of His second coming. Momaday's fluid use of both Matthew and Mark illustrates the harmony of Scripture.

48) *"When I cannot speak Thy Name I want Thee most to restore me. Restore me!"* (p. 48).

Fray Nicolás' plea echoes the pleas of some of Scripture's kings. The mortally ill Hezekiah, the thirteenth King of Judah, cries *"O restore me to health and let me live!"* (Isa. 38:16). David, the second King of Israel, proclaims that God *"restores my soul"* and then pleads with Him to *"restore to me the joy of Your salvation"* (Ps. 23:3; 51:12).

49) *"Thy Spirit"* (p. 48).

The Spirit of God and Christ is the Holy Spirit (Ps. 51:11; John 14:26; Acts 5:3-4). He is the third Person of the Godhead. The other divine Persons are *"the Father and the Son"* (Matt. 28:19). The Church refers to the Godhead as the Trinity, meaning one God in essence but three in Person. "Trinity" is not used in Scripture. Tertullian (A.D. ca. 150-225), an early Church father, is credited with the word's formulation.

50) *"I am too frail for Thee!"* (p. 48).

David sings, *"LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am"* (Ps. 39:4 KJV).

51) *"Thy Mother"* (pp. 48 and 49)

This phrase refers to Mary, the mother of Jesus. See reference #41.

52) *"25th December Lord Thy Nativity"* (p. 48).

The Lord's Nativity is the occasion of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. This incarnation of the second person of the Trinity is celebrated annually on the twenty-fifth of December. However,

the precise date of Christ's birth is not stated in Scripture. In most traditions the Nativity is displayed with figures of its plausible characters.

53) "For this Day in the town of David a Saviour has been born unto Thee Who is Christ the Lord" (p. 48).

"*'For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord,'*" declared the angel of the Lord to the shepherds of the Nativity (Luke 2:11 KJV).

54) "*Thou sayest Nicolás take up thy strength in Me for the day shall come that I must take thy heft upon My back*" (p. 48).

If Nicolás is to stand at the great throne of the righteous judgment of God, then he must yield his heft—his loaded weight of sin—to Jesus. The Son must drink Nicolás' cup of the holy hatred and subsequent wrath of the Father (cf., Matt. 20:22; 26:39, 42, 44; Mark 10:38; 14:36, 39; Luke 22:42). "*If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, [how can Nicolás] stand?*" asks the Psalmist (130:3). For Jesus "*Himself [must bear Nicolás'] sins in His body on the cross, so that [Nicolás] might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds [Nicolás will be] healed*" (1 Pet. 2:24). Nicolás rests assured that Jesus' "*yoke is easy and [His] burden is light*" and that he will be sustained if he "*cast[s] [his] burden[s] upon the LORD*" (Matt. 11:30; Ps. 55:22).

55)* *“His Excellency’s Conquistadora”* (p. 49).

La Conquistadora, or Our Lady of Conquest, is a statue of the Virgin Mary in the Cathedral of Santa Fe, New Mexico. A Franciscan missionary brought the statue to America.⁴

56)* *“Blessed Infant of Prague & Thy Crown”* (p. 49).

The Infant of Prague is a sixteenth-century statue of the infant Jesus.⁵ Venerated by the Roman Catholic Church, the wax-coated wooded figure resides in the Carmelite Church of Our Lady Victorious in Prague. The infant wears a crown.

57) *“Thy visitors were Thine own brute creatures”* (p. 49).

The visitors are the animals surrounding baby Jesus as he lies in a manger (cf., Luke 2:7, 12, 16). Church tradition has always placed animals in the Nativity since it is plausible that animals were present. However, Scripture makes no explicit mention of the creatures.

58) *“Ynocencia Thine Herold Angel”* (p. 49).

The angel of the Lord heralds the birth of Christ to the shepherds of the Nativity (Luke 2:8-12). Ynocencia is an alternative to Inocencia meaning “innocence.” Momaday is incorporating the idea of innocence in two possible ways: the fact that the angel is proclaiming the arrival of the innocent Son of God, or that the angel, himself, is innocent of sin (cf., 1 Pet. 2:22; Isa. 53:9; 1 Tim. 5:21).

⁴ “Our Lady of Conquest, Santa Fe, New Mexico.” *Roman-Catholic-Saints.com*. roman-catholic-saints.com, n.d. Web. 6 May 2015.

⁵ Jones, Michael. “The Infant of Prague.” *Medjugorje USA*. medjugorjeusa.org, n.d. Web. 6 May 2015.

59) “*San Juanito*” (p. 49).

Juanito is a diminutive of Juan meaning John. Hence “San Juanito” means “Saint John” (see reference #26). John is not in the Nativity.

60) “*Thy Father Joseph*” (p. 49).

Joseph is “*the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born*” (Matt. 1:16). He is beside his wife in the Nativity (Luke 2:4-7).

61)* “*Avelino*” (p. 49).

Fray Nicolás has misspelled the name of the Roman Catholic Saint, Andrew Avellino (A.D. 1521-1608).

62) “*Pasqual*” (p. 49).

Pasqual is a variant spelling of Pascal meaning “Easter child.”⁶ The Nativity celebrates the birth of the One who resurrects on Easter morn. Fray Nicolás may also be referring to the famed Roman Catholic, Blaise Pascal (A.D. 1623-62).

63) “*Viviano*” (p. 49).

Viviano denotes the virgin martyr Saint Vibiana (A.D. ca. 250). She is the namesake of the former Cathedral of Saint Vibiana in Los Angeles and is the patron saint of the Roman

⁶ Campbell, Mike. “Pascal.” *Behind the Name*. behindthename.com, n.d. Web. 8 May 2015.

Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles.⁷ Additionally, Viviano suggests Viviani meaning “full of life.”⁸ The Nativity is most certainly full of life—full of the One who gives eternal life (John 4:14; 7:38).

64) “*Thy Wise Men*” (p. 49).

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him’” (Matt. 2:1-2 KJV). Church tradition has always placed three wise men in the Nativity, with each presenting gifts of “gold, frankincense and myrrh” (Matt. 2:11). However, Scripture depicts neither the number of wise men nor the precise time of their visit—only that they visit Him as a child (Matt. 2:1-12).

65) “*Lupita Thine ass*” (p. 49).

Lupita is a diminutive of Guadalupe.⁹ This place-name refers to Jesus’ mother, Mary, as she is Mexico’s “Our Lady of Guadalupe.”¹⁰ According to Church tradition regarding the Nativity, Mary rides an ass/donkey while traveling to Bethlehem with child and Joseph (Luke 2:3-5).

66) “*Thine ass & wiser*” (p. 49).

In addition to Mary’s donkey, “ass” and “wiser” both denote Balaam’s talking donkey in the Old Testament. The donkey is wiser than Balaam as the Apostle Peter considers it rebuking

⁷ “About: History - Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels.” *Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels*. olacathedral.org, n.d. Web. 6 May 2015.

⁸ “Viviani.” *ThinkBabyNames.com*. thinkbabynames.com, n.d. Web. 8 May 2015.

⁹ Campbell, Mike. “Lupita.”

¹⁰ Campbell, Mike. “Guadalupe.”

and forbidding “*the madness of the prophet*” (2 Pet. 2:15-16 KJV). Balaam’s donkey is not in the Nativity.

67)* “*Augustín & Francisco*” (p. 49).

These two names refer to Saint Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 354-430) and Saint Francis of Assisi (A.D. 1181-1226). Saint Augustine, aside from the Apostles, is arguably the most influential theologian since the Church’s beginnings; Saint Francis is credited with staging the first Nativity scene.¹¹

68) “*Thy lambs*” (p. 49).

The shepherds and their lambs are in the Nativity. See reference #58.

69) “*They sang & I think Thou must have heard no matter Thou hadst been deaf even*” (p. 49).

Upon the heralding angel’s proclamation of good news to the shepherds, “*suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased’*” (Luke 2:13-14). This choir of heaven’s angels must have been loud enough for even the deaf to hear.

70) “*Domingo*” (p. 49).

Domingo is the Spanish form of Dominic. Saint Dominic of Caleruega (A.D. 1170-1221) founded the Dominican Order. Furthermore, “Dominic” is derived from the Latin “Dominicus”

¹¹ “Understanding the Nativity Scene.” *Archdiocese of St. Louis*. archstl.org, n.d. Web. 8 May 2015.

meaning “of the Lord.” All those born on the Lord’s Day, i.e., Sunday, have been traditionally bestowed with this name.¹²

71) “*Until Epiphany*” (p. 49).

The Epiphany is a Christian festival commemorating the epiphany of Christ to the gentiles via the wise men (Matt. 2:1-12). The feast is celebrated annually on the sixth of January.

72) “*Thy Patron Little One*” (p. 49).

See reference #56.

73) “*Thy Circumcision*” (p. 49).

Jesus, a Jew and direct descendant of Abraham, receives the circumcision of the flesh of His foreskin on the eighth day of His earthly life (for lineage see Matt. 1:1-16 and Luke 3:23-38). This is in full accordance with God’s commands to Abraham: “*This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations*” (Gen. 17:10-12).

¹² Campbell, Mike. “Dominic.”

74) *“When 8 days were fulfilled for the Circumcision of the Child His Name was called Jesus the Name given Him by the Angel before He was Conceived in the Womb”* (p. 49).

“When eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the Child, His name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before He was conceived in the womb” (Luke 2:21 KJV; cf., Matt. 1:20-21).

75)* *“Confesses 9 mortal & 32 venial sins!”* (p. 50).

According to the dogma of Roman Catholicism, sin is ordered hierarchically: the worst sins are mortal sins; lesser sins are venial sins. One must confess one’s mortal and venial sins to the priest. Confession of sin, in general, is biblical, but not necessarily solely to a priest (James 5:16; 1 John 1:9). There is longstanding contention between Protestants and Roman Catholics on the nature of confession.

76) *“Child born to Manuelita”* (p. 50).

Manuelita is a diminutive of Manuela, the feminine form of Manuel, the Spanish form of Emmanuel.¹³ Emmanuel refers to a name of God: *“Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, ’ which translated means, ‘God with us’”* (Matt. 1:23; cf., Isaiah 7:14).

77) *“To baptize”* (p. 50).

To baptize is to administer the sacrament of Baptism (see reference #23). Baptism is the New Testament’s sign of God’s Covenant with His people; the Old Testament’s sign is

¹³ Campbell, Mike. “Manuelita.”

Circumcision. Many views within the Church exist as to the actual manifestation of Baptism. All views, however, fall into either one of two categories: paedobaptism (“paedo” meaning child) or credobaptism (“credo” meaning professing the creed and faith). Within both categories some view Baptism as having regenerative power, while others view the sacrament only as an act of Christian obedience with no regenerative power. The mode of Baptism is also heavily debated: sprinkle, dip, pour or immerse?

78) *“I advise to baptize this same day & do so at 3 o’clock”* (p. 50).

Fray Nicolás’ advice to baptize baby Juan is indicative of his Roman Catholic paedobaptist belief. Furthermore, his advice to baptize at three o’clock alludes to the time of Jesus’ death. Jesus dies at *“the ninth hour”* (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34; Luke 23:44). In today’s time the ninth hour is three o’clock in the afternoon. Baby Juan will receive an extra holy baptism.

79) *“A testament to his faith, to be written and read again at a later time”* (p. 50).

Father Olguin desires the remembrance that is given to the faithful saints of Hebrews 11. See reference #31.

80) *“You have my best thanks for the books & paper”* (p. 51).

The Apostle Paul requests of his disciple Timothy: *“When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments”* (2 Tim. 4:13).

81) *"God in His infinite Goodness will reward you according to your generosity"* (p. 51).

Paul declares that God *"will render to each person according to his deeds"* (Rom. 2:6).
"Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully" (2 Cor. 9:6).

82) *"I see in my diary it is 10 years & more since you came to me on my deathbed & gave me your richest blessing. Truly I am Lazarus"* (p. 51).

An allusion to Lazarus implies the resurrection of the dead. Jesus comes to the tomb of Lazarus, who had been dead for more than four days, and shouts, *"'Lazarus, come forth.' The man who had died came forth"* (John 11:43-44). Paul also raises a young man from the dead (Acts 20:7-12).

83) *"Cor. I. O death where is thy victory? O death where is thy sting?"* (p. 51).

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55 KJV).

84) *"That most sinister Angel is not once out of my sight. I watch for him to come near me but he mocks & tarries. He tarries brother"* (p. 51).

The most sinister Angel recalls the Apostle Paul's tarrying thorn in the flesh: *"Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly,*

therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me”
(2 Cor. 12:7-9).

85) *“That Serpent which even is the One our most ancient enemy”* (p. 51).

The Serpent refers to Satan (see reference #6 and #8). As the ancient enemy of God’s people, he prowls *“around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour”* (1 Pet. 5:8; cf., Eph. 6:12).

86)* *“He lays hold of the paten & the Host”* (p. 51).

The paten (i.e., the plate) holds the host (i.e., the bread) while the Eucharist is being administered.

87) *“Where is the Most Holy Spirit that he is not struck down at that moment?”* (p. 51).

Fray Nicolás is imploring the Holy Spirit to kill Francisco as He killed Ananias and Sapphira. The husband and wife both lie to the Holy Spirit and consequently He kills them on the spot (Acts 5:1-11).

88) *“My good intercession”* (p. 52).

Good intercession denotes intercessory prayer—divine intercession on another’s behalf. Jesus is the ultimate intercessor since it *“is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us”* (Rom. 8:34).

89) *"It returns on you & your children"* (p. 52).

"I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments" (Exod. 20:5-6; cf., 34:7; Num. 14:18).

90) *"His image"* (p. 52).

"His image" signifies the biblical reality that humans are created in the image of God: *"God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them"* (Gen. 1:27). Theologians refer to this as the intrinsic *imago Dei* (Latin for "image of God") in every human.

91) *"Some days He comes to me in a sourceless light that rises on His image at my bed & then I am caught of it & shine also as with lightning on me"* (p. 52).

God comes to Fray Nicolás as a rising light upon his person ("His image" is Nicolás). This astonishing brightness conveys the eternal radiance of Jesus and the future radiance of Christians. Upon the mount of transfiguration, before Peter, James and John, Jesus' *"face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light...gleaming,"* and even *"radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them"* (Matt. 17:2; Luke 9:29; Mark 9:3). Years later Peter reminds his readers, *"we were eyewitnesses of His majesty"* upon the mountain (2 Pet. 1:16). The author of Hebrews declares that Jesus *"is the radiance of [God the Father's] glory"* (Heb. 1:3). Regarding Christians, Jesus declares, *"the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father"* (Matt. 13:43). Additionally, the prophet Elijah,

himself present at the transfiguration, was caught up to heaven amidst “*a chariot of fire and horses of fire*” (2 Kgs. 2:11).

92) “*He does console me*” (p. 52).

To console is to comfort: “*the LORD has comforted His people*” (Isa. 49:13).

93) “*Thus does He chide me & I take some humor in it for surely I would not be lost & scolded too*” (p. 52).

Fray Nicolás is humored since he understands the biblical decree that God only scolds those whom have been found by Him: “*My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives*” (Heb. 12:5-6; cf., Prov. 3:11-12).

94) “*She would know the arrangement of her days and hours*” (p. 54).

Angela’s attribute implies God’s authority in arranging the life of mankind: “*His days are determined, the number of his months are with Thee, Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass*” (Job 14:5 KJV).

95) “*And the town lies out like a scattering of bones in the heart of the land, low in the valley*” (p. 55).

The town’s portrayal parallels Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of dry bones: “*The hand of the LORD was upon me, and He brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones*” (Ezek. 37:1).

96) *“Deprived of the sky, the eagle soars in man’s imagination; there is divine malice in the wild eyes, an unmerciful intent. The eagle ranges far and wide over the land, farther than any other creature, and all things there are related simply by having existence in the perfect vision of the bird”* (p. 57).

The eagle is used as an analogy throughout the Old Testament: *“‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself’”; “When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For wealth certainly makes itself wings like an eagle that flies toward the heavens”; “The way of an eagle in the sky...the way of a man with a maid”; “Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles”; “Our pursuers were swifter than the eagles of the sky”* (Exod. 19:4; Prov. 23:5; 30:19; Isa. 40:31; Lam. 4:19).

97) *“After four centuries of Christianity”* (p. 58).

Christianity first entered the America Southwest during the sixteenth-century, four centuries before this statement is uttered. The durability of Christianity echoes Jesus’ two-millennia-old declaration: *“I will build My Church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it”* (Matt. 16:18).

98) *“It would have been a creation song; he would have sung lowly of the first world, of fire and flood, and of the emergence of dawn from the hills”* (p. 59).

Although this text refers to the Navajo conception of creation, one can sing a biblical creation song if it corresponds to Moses’ depiction of creation in Genesis.

99) *"A vague desire to weep, for evil had long since found him out and knew who he was"* (p. 66).

According to Scripture, evil is all around and within mankind. David confesses, *"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me"* (Ps. 51:5). And as Moses declares, if one sins against God then *"be sure your sin will find you out"* (Num. 32:23).

100) *"Three days passed"* (p. 68).

The passing of three days is extremely significant in Scripture: *"For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth"* (Matt. 12:40). Jesus is recalling the prophet Jonah being swallowed and for three days residing in a whale, and is foretelling of His three-day tomb burial and subsequent resurrection on the third day (Jon. 1:17; Luke 18:33; 1 Cor. 15:4).

101) *"By the grace of these last few days, the affairs of the parish had been set in order"* (p. 68).

Momaday's use of "by the grace" with the connected positive outcome for the parish is rooted in biblical truth. In the words of the Apostle Paul, *"by the grace of God I am what I am...by grace you have been saved"* (Eph. 2:8; 1 Cor. 15:10).

102) *"Father Olguin had taken honey from the hives"* (p. 69).

The sacred priest's use of honey has biblical overtones in the person of the prophet John the Baptist: *"Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey"* (Matt. 3:4).

103) *"His own prejudices: a jealousy for Aesop and the ring of Genesis, an instinctive demand upon all histories to be fabulous"* (p. 71).

The "ring of Genesis" refers to the sound of the fabulous account of history within the first Old Testament book. Genesis contains a record of creation's beginnings, e.g., the first light, man, marriage, human sin, promise of the Christ, murder, rancher/nomad, musician and metal craftsman (Gen. 1:3, 27; 2:24; 3:6, 15; 4:8, 20-22).

104) *"Damnation and deliverance"* (p. 71).

Damnation and deliverance encompass the two ultimate destinations for mankind: damnation to hell fire or deliverance to heavenly life. As the Apostle John foresaw: *"If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire"* (Rev. 20:15).

105)* *"He waited for her to speak. 'Oh my God,' she said, laughing. 'I am heartily sorry . . . for having offended Thee'"* (p. 72).

Angela taunts Father Olguin with lines from the Act of Contrition, a prayer in the Roman Catholic Church.

106) *"Thunder cracked in the sky and rolled upon the mountains. It grew deep and filled the funnel of the canyon and reverberated endlessly upon the cliffs. Lightning flashed"* (p. 73).

The conditions upon the mountains as the Navajo festival begins allude to the conditions upon Mount Sinai during the giving of the Ten Commandments to Israel: *"there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound...all*

the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking” (Exod. 19:16; 20:18).

107) *“The faint falling apart of the earth itself, breaking and shifting under the weight of water” (p. 74).*

The depiction of the storm’s destruction suggests the destruction wrought by the Genesis flood. At the flood’s onset, *“all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened” (Gen. 7:11).* Rain falling *“upon the earth for forty days and forty nights”* must have certainly bent and reshaped the earth (Gen. 7:12).

108) *“For they, too, were a harvest, in some intractable sense the regeneration of his own bone and blood” (p. 76).*

This allusion is to the use of “regeneration.” Biblical regeneration is Christ harvesting a dead soul unto life. *“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Cor. 5:17).* The Apostle Paul continues, *“when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:4-5).*

109) *“The shrine for Porcingula, Our Lady of Angels” (p. 77).*

Porcingula refers to Porziuncola, a small chapel located within the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli near Assisi, Italy. The name of the basilica, along with Our Lady of Angels, refer to the same person, namely, Mary, the mother of Jesus. Porcingula also alludes to Saint

Francis of Assisi since it was near the Porziuncola that he started the Franciscan Order.¹⁴ This has further allusions in the novel as Abel's grandfather, Francisco, derives his name from Saint Francis (see reference #192).

110) *"The two spoke low to each other, carefully, as if the meaning of what they said was strange and infallible"* (p. 81, mentioned also on pp. 86 and 134).

This allusion is to the use of "infallible." That which is infallible is that which is precious, historically constant and without error. All Scripture is infallible—faultless from beginning to end—since it is, as the Apostle Paul decrees, *"inspired by God"* (2 Tim. 3:16). Furthermore, *"no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God"* (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

111) *"Abel waited. The white man raised his arms, as if to embrace him, and came forward. But Abel had already taken hold of the knife, and he drew it. He leaned inside the white man's arms and drove the blade up under the bones of the breast and across"* (p. 82).

Abel's murder of the white man is an allusion, in reverse, to the Genesis account of Cain's murder of Abel, the son of Adam: *"It came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him"* (Gen. 4:8). The white man raises his arms and is murdered; Cain raises his arms and murders. Momaday's Abel seeks vengeance on the white man since the man flailed him with the sacrificial rooster; Adam's Cain seeks vengeance on Abel since *"Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain"* (Heb. 11:4).

¹⁴ Bihl, Michael. "Portiuncula." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 12. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911. 7 May 2015
<<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12286a.htm>>.

112) *"The white hands still lay upon him as if in benediction"* (p. 83).

The laying on of hands in Scripture often coincides with the giving of a benediction. Jacob, Israel himself, *"stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim...and his left hand on Manasseh's head...He blessed Joseph, and said...bless the lads..."* (Gen. 48:14-16). Aaron, Israel's high priest, *"lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them"* (Lev. 9:22). Biblical benedictions are the imparting of priestly blessings upon God's people (cf., Num. 6:22-27; Matt. 19:13-15; Acts 8:17; Rom. 16:25-27; Eph. 3:20-21).

113) *"In his terror he knew only to wield the knife. He turned it upon the massive white arms"* (p. 83).

Abel wields his knife out of fear, as does the Apostle Peter upon his Master's arrest: *"Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear"* (John 18:10; cf., Mark 14:47).

114)* *"There is a small silverside fish that is found along the coast of Southern California"* (p. 89, mentioned also on p. 98).

The small silverside fish are grunions. An allusion that can be drawn from Momaday's use of grunions is to that of the early Christians' use of the Ichthys, a Greek acrostic meaning "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior." The Ichthys is drawn in the shape of a fish.

115) *"In the spring and summer it spawns on the beach during the first three hours after each of the three high tides following the highest tide"* (p. 89).

For the biblical significance of the number three, see reference #1, #49, #78 and #100.

116) *"These fish come by the hundreds from the sea. They hurl themselves upon the land and writhe in the light of the moon"* (p. 89).

The grunions' writhing implies Jesus' depiction of mankind: *"This is the judgment, the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light"* (John 3:19). Grunions writhe in the light of the moon (which reflects the light of the Sun) as mankind writhes in the light of the Son. People sin.

117) *"They are among the most helpless creatures on the face of the earth"* (p. 89).

The grunions' helplessness recalls the reason for Jesus' feeling of compassion towards people: *"They [are] distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd"* (Matt. 9:36).

118) *"Fishermen, lovers, passers-by catch them up in their bare hands"* (p. 89).

The catching of the grunions suggests Jesus' first call to future Apostles, the fishermen Peter and Andrew: *"Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men"* (Matt. 4:19). Given the previous allusion to that of un-shepherded and distressed sinners, it makes biblical sense to fish for grunions.

119) *"Priest of the Sun"* (p. 89, mentioned also on pp. 90, 91, 98, 109, 110, 111, 114 and 127)

The Priest of the Sun alludes to Jesus and Christians, as sun is a homonym of son. Christians worship the Son (Matt. 28:17). Scripture declares of Jesus: *"We have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God"*; *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"* (Heb. 4:14; Matt. 16:16). Furthermore, Christians are priests of the Son:

“Jesus Christ...has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father” (Rev. 1:5-6).

However, the reader is left in ambiguity as to Momaday’s intended allusion since Tosamah is both Kiowa and Christian (see reference #184). Thus Priest of the Sun is both a Kiowa and biblical allusion.

120) *“His disciple Cruz”* (p. 89).

The Priest of the Sun is fulfilling the Son’s command to *“go and make disciples of all nations”* (Matt. 28:19). Furthermore, Cruz embodies his master’s task as “cruz” is Spanish for “cross”: *“Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me’”* (Matt. 16:24; cf., Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23).

121) *“Rev. J. B. B. Tosamah, Pastor & Priest of the Sun”* (p. 89).

Tosamah’s title of Pastor reflects the Son’s appointing: *“He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers”* (Eph. 4:11).

122) *“‘The Gospel According to John’”* (p. 89).

Tosamah is preaching from the Gospel according to John, the fourth book in the canonical ordering of the New Testament.

123) *“In back of the dais there was a screen of purple drapery”* (p. 90).

The screen of purple drapery, as a backdrop to Tosamah’s preaching upon the dais, is reminiscent of the purple screens and curtains in Israel’s tabernacle (Exod. 26:1; 36:37). Israel’s

worship was directed from the tabernacle, for within dwelt God Himself (see reference #11). The Church's worship is directed from the preaching of the Word (see reference #139).

124) "*The drapes parted and the Priest of the Sun appeared*" (p. 90).

At the end of time the Son will come through the parted heavens above (Rev. 19:11).

Furthermore, upon the Son's death: "*the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom*" (Mark 15:38; cf., Matt. 27:50-51; Luke 23:45-46).

125) "*He was shaggy and awful-looking*" (p. 90).

The prophet Isaiah foretells of the Son's ugliness: "*Like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him*" (Isa. 53:2).

126) "*In principio erat Verbum*" (p. 91).

"*In principio erat Verbum*" meaning "*In the beginning was the Word*" (John 1:1). These are the first words of John's Gospel. The Latin is from Saint Jerome's Vulgate.

127) "*Think of Genesis*" (p. 91).

See reference #103.

128) "*'In principio erat Verbum.' Think of Genesis.*" (p. 91).

The first words of John's Gospel cause Tosamah to think of Genesis since "in principio" are also the first words of Genesis: "*In the beginning God created*" (Gen. 1:1). In both accounts

“in the beginning” is identical in both Koine Greek (LXX for Genesis) and Vulgate Latin.

Tosamah is strategically linking John to Genesis and Genesis to John.

129) *“Think of how it was before the world was made. There was nothing, the Bible says.*

‘And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.’

It was dark, and there was nothing. There were no mountains, no trees, no rocks, no rivers.

There was nothing. But there was darkness all around” (p. 91).

Tosamah is referring to Genesis’ account of the beginning: *“And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep”* (Gen. 1:2 KJV).

130) *“In the darkness something happened. Something happened! There was a single sound. Far away in the darkness there was a single sound”* (p. 91).

Tosamah is alluding to the sound of God’s voice amidst the darkness: *“And God said, ‘let there be light’”* (Gen. 1:3 KJV).

131) *“It took hold of the darkness and there was light”* (p. 91).

Tosamah is recreating the effect of God’s voice amidst the darkness: *“And there was light”* (Gen. 1:3 KJV).

132) *“It was almost nothing in itself, a single sound, a word”* (p. 91).

This is Tosamah’s first mention of “word.” In Genesis everything is created by the power of God’s word. In John’s Gospel, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”* (John 1:1).

133) *"It scarcely was; but it was, and everything began"* (p. 91).

Tosamah's use of "[a word] was and everything began" denotes the beginning of time in John's Gospel: *"In the beginning was the Word"* (John 1:1).

134) *"Thank you so much, Brother Cruz"* (p. 92).

The Son's disciples are also His brothers (Heb. 2:11; see reference #120).

135) *"Good evening, blood brothers and sisters, and welcome, welcome"* (p. 92).

Tosamah's greeting refers to the common blood bond shared by brothers and sisters in Christ. All Christians share a common Father in God, their only heavenly Father (Isa. 64:8). They are bonded together by the "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5 KJV). Jesus is a brother to all Christians to whom redemption is purchased by His blood (Eph. 1:7; Heb 2:11). Thereby signifying that Christians are blood brothers and sisters.

136) *"Great Spirit"* (p. 92).

The Great Spirit implies the Holy Spirit (see reference #49). However, Momaday suggests ambiguity since the Great Spirit also alludes to Native American deities.

137) *"May the Great Spirit...be with you always"* (p. 92).

Tosamah's benediction echoes the Apostle Paul's benediction to the Corinthians: *"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all"* (13:14). Paul incorporates the full Godhead, whereas Tosamah refers only to the Spirit.

138) “*In the beginning was the Word*” (p. 92, mentioned also on pp. 93, 97 and 98).

“In the beginning was the Word” (John 1:1 KJV).

139) “*I have taken as my text this evening the almighty Word itself*” (p. 92).

Tosamah is making a pun, as both Scripture and Jesus are referred to as “the Word.” The Apostle Paul exhorts pastors to “*preach the word*,” referring to all of Scripture (2 Tim. 4:2). Therefore, Tosamah and other ministers alike, preach from a text of the word. But Jesus is “*the Word [become] flesh*” (John 1:14). Hence, Tosamah’s text (John 1) is both the word and the Word, or as he puts it, “the almighty Word itself.”

140) “*There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe*” (p. 92).

“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through Him might believe” (John 1:6-7 KJV). This reference to John is to the prophet John the Baptist.

141) “*The Word*” (p. 92, mentioned also on pp. 94, 95, 97 and 98).

Tosamah is referring to Jesus and Scripture. See reference #139.

142) “*Old John*” (p. 92, mentioned also on pp. 93 and 97).

See reference #146 and #160.

143) “*The Truth*” (p. 92, mentioned also on pp. 93 and 94).

Tosamah is implying Jesus, who declares, “*I am the way, and the truth, and the life*” (John 14:6).

144) “*The Truth was overgrown with fat, and the fat was God*” (p. 92).

If the Truth is Jesus, then Tosamah is painting a word picture of Jesus’ incarnation and consequent divine flesh.

145) “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*” (p. 92, mentioned also on p. 93).

“*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*” (John 1:1 KJV).

146) “*Old John, see, he got up one morning and caught sight of the Truth. It must have been like a bolt of lightning, and the sight of it made him blind*” (p. 92).

John the Baptist is physically disturbed during his first moment in the presence of the Truth: “*When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb*” (Luke 1:41; see reference #143). Momaday suggests ambiguity of meaning as to the identity of old John (see reference #142).

147) “*That was the instant of revelation, inspiration*” (p. 92).

Tosamah’s use of revelation and inspiration alludes to the way in which the Apostle John wrote his works of Scripture: “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*”; “*The Revelation of*

Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John” (2 Tim. 3:16 KJV; Rev. 1:1).

148) *“He must have been shaking and laughing and crying and yelling and praying—all at the same time—and he must have been drunk and delirious with the Truth”* (p. 93).

Tosamah may be referring to John and the other Apostles’ physical demeanor at Pentecost: *“they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues”* (Acts 2:4). These actions cause the surrounding Jews to mock and think them drunk (Acts 2:13). The allusion refers to being filled with the Truth since the Spirit and Jesus, along with the Father, are One together in the Trinity (see reference #49 and #143).

149) *“Eternal Truth...the everlasting Truth”* (p. 93).

Tosamah is signifying Jesus’ eternal and everlasting nature: *“A Child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us...His name will be called...Eternal Father”*; *“Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM’”*; *“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever”*; *“‘From everlasting I was established, from the beginning, from the earliest times of the earth’”* (Isa. 9:6; John 8:58; Ps. 45:6; Prov. 8:23; see reference #143).

150) *“The bone and blood and muscle of the Truth”* (p. 93).

See reference #144.

151) *"He went on to talk about Jews and Jerusalem, Levites and Pharisees, Moses and Philip and Andrew and Peter"* (p. 93).

Tosamah is referring to people and places that John mentions in the second half of his Gospel's first chapter: *"The Law was given through Moses...the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem...they had been sent from the Pharisees...Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter"* (John 1:17, 19, 24, 44, cf., 40, 43-46, 48).

152) *"The perfect vision faded from his mind...he was desperate and confused, and in his confusion he stumbled and went on...he imposed his idea of God upon the everlasting Truth"* (p. 93).

Tosamah's opinion of the Apostle John's inspiration while writing his Gospel is at odds with Christian theology, as it is a denial of biblical infallibility (see reference #110). Christian orthodoxy states that no author of Scripture was desperate, confused or an imposer of his personal opinion.

153) *"In his presence, here on his own ground, you are as children, mere babes in the woods. You must not mind, for in this you have a certain advantage. A child can listen and learn. The Word is sacred to a child"* (p. 94).

Tosamah's mingling of the white man's ways with the ways of the Word alludes to the Word's words: *"Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven"*; *"I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have*

hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants'” (Matt. 18:3-4; Luke 10:21; see reference #141).

154) *“His regard for language—for the Word itself—as an instrument of creation has diminished nearly to the point of no return. It may be that he will perish by the Word”* (p. 95).

Tosamah’s logic denotes the Word’s similar logic: *“Put your sword back into its place; all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword”* (Matt. 26:52; see reference #141).

155) *“They came from nothing into sound and meaning”* (p. 96).

The Kiowa woman’s conception of the origin of words suggests the Christian notion of creation’s origin: *ex nihilo*. This Latin phrase refers to God’s creation of the world “out of nothing” (see reference #129, #130 and #131).

156) *“They were beyond price; they could neither be bought nor sold. And she never threw words away”* (p. 96).

The Kiowa woman’s idolatry for words recalls Jesus’ parable of the pearl of great price: *“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it”* (Matt. 13:45-46 KJV).

157) *“Suddenly there was thunder and lightning. A Voice spoke to him and said, ‘Why are you following me? What do you want?’”* (p. 96).

The Kiowa man's encounter with the Voice (which is capitalized and thus conveys the divine) is similar to the Apostle Paul's (then Saul) encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus: "*Suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?'*" (Acts 9:3-4).

158) "*'Take me with you,' the Voice said, 'and I will give you whatever you want'*" (p. 96).

The Kiowa divine's offer of satisfaction on the condition of communion is indicative of the biblical divine's offer: "*Delight yourself in the LORD; and He will give you the desires of your heart*" (Ps. 37:4).

159) "*There was a voice, a sound, a word—and everything began*" (p. 96).

Tosamah is alluding to creation's beginning as described in both Genesis (i.e., the voice, sound and word of God) and John's Gospel (i.e., the Word). See reference #132.

160) "*Old Saint John*" (p. 97).

See reference #26.

161) "*The Word was*" (p. 97).

"*The Word was...the Word was*" (John 1:1 KJV).

162) "*There was only the dark infinity in which nothing was. And something happened. At the distance of a star something happened, and everything began*" (p. 97).

This is Tosamah's description of God's creation of the world *ex nihilo*. See reference #155.

163) "*The Word did not come into being, but it was. It did not break upon the silence, but it was older than the silence*" (p. 97).

Tosamah is referring to Jesus' eternal nature at the beginning of creation. See reference #141, #145 and #149.

164) "*The silence was made of it*" (p. 97).

Tosamah is suggesting the relationship between all substance and the Word: "*In Him all things hold together*"; "*All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being...The world was made through Him*"; "*God...has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world*" (Col. 1:17; John 1:2-3, 10; Heb. 1:1-2; see reference #141).

165) "'*Old John caught sight of something terrible. The thing standing before him said, 'Why are you following me? What do you want?' And from that day the Word has belonged to us, who have heard it for what it is, who have lived in fear and awe of it*'"

John's encounter with the Word refers to the Kiowa man's encounter with the Voice. This alludes further to the Apostle Paul's encounter with the Word made flesh (see reference #139 and #157). Upon encountering Jesus, Paul is converted and starts living, as do all Christians, in fear and awe of Him: "*Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with*

reverence and awe”; “*Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him*” (Heb. 12:28; Ps. 33:8).

166) “*In the Word was the beginning*” (p. 98).

Tosamah switches “Word” and “beginning” from John 1:1: “*In the beginning was the Word.*”

167) “*His body, like his mind, had turned on him; it was his enemy*” (p. 101).

This reality partially alludes to the Apostle Paul’s reality: “*So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin...The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God*” (Rom. 7:25 KJV; 8:7). The difference is that only Paul’s flesh has turned on him; his mind is not his enemy as it is still serving God.

168) “*The shoes...were finely crafted and therefore admirable in the way that the work of a good potter or painter or silversmith is admirable: the object is beautiful in itself, worthy of appreciation as a whole and for its own sake*” (p. 106).

This oration on the shoes and their intrinsic worth is parallel to a biblical reality of all mankind. Scripture declares that mankind has intrinsic worth since he was created in the image of God (see reference #90). He is “*fearfully and wonderfully made*” clay and God is his potter (Ps. 139:14; Isa. 64:8). As the ultimate craftsmanship of God, mankind is therefore beautiful in his own right and worthy of appreciation as a whole being. No man, woman or child is ugly, for all reflect the beauty of God. Likewise, no one is worthy of disrespect, for all exemplify the beauty of God.

169) "*Tosamah, orator, physician, Priest of the Sun*" (p. 109, mentioned also on p. 127).

Tosamah as physician implies the Son, the Great Physician: "*It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners*"; "*No doubt you will quote this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we heard was done at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well'*" (Mark 2:17; Luke 4:23).

170) "*The Priest of the Sun was going to conduct a prayer meeting*" (p. 110, "prayer meeting" mentioned also on p. 135).

A prayer meeting refers to the common Christian activity of meeting regularly for prayer. Scripture instructs Christians to "*pray without ceasing,*" along with "*not forsaking [their] own assembling together*" (1 Thess. 5:17; Heb. 10:25). The early Church made it a habit to meet together and pray (Acts 12:12).

171) "*A paper bag containing forty-four peyote buttons*" (p. 111).

The allusion to forty-four peyote buttons possibly signifies a number in the revelation to the Apostle John: "*And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel*" (Rev. 7:4).

172) "*The incense-blessing ceremony followed*" (p. 111).

A ceremony involving incense conveys the importance of incense in Israel's worship of God (Exod. 30:1-10).

173) *"There was no center to it; it was everywhere at once"* (pp. 111-12).

The fire's nature denotes God's omnipresence: *"The eyes of the LORD are in every place"*; *"'Can a man hide himself in hiding places so I do not see him?' declares the LORD. 'Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?' declares the LORD"* (Prov. 15:3; Jer. 23:24).

174) *"There was nothing in the world but a single point of light...and there was sound"* (p. 112).

The fire's ignition resonates with lines that describe the beginning of the world: *"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep...and God said, 'let there be light': and there was light"* (Gen. 1:2-3 KJV).

175) *"In Jesus' name. Amen"* (p. 113).

Cruz's phrase is the common ending to a Christian prayer, as Christ Himself says, *"Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it"* (John 14:13-14).

176) *"Jesus"* (p. 116, mentioned also on p. 117).

Fat Josie's use of "Jesus" is uttered blasphemously. To use Jesus' name in a blasphemous way is to go against the third commandment that God gives to Moses upon Mount Sinai: *"'You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain'"* (Exod. 20:7). Jesus is the Lord (Exod. 3:14; John 8:58).

177) *"War was their sacred business...when at last, divided and illprovisioned, they were driven onto the Staked Plain in the cold of autumn, they fell into panic"* (p. 128).

The Kiowa disposition towards war and its consequence allude to the tribes of Simeon and Levi, as foretold by their father Jacob: “*Simeon and Levi are brothers; their swords are implements of violence. Let my soul not enter into their council; Let not my glory be united with their assembly; Because in their anger they slew men, and in their self-will they lamed oxen. Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel. I will disperse them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel*” (Gen. 49:5-7).

178) “*They acquired Tai-me, the sacred sun dance doll, from that moment the chief object and symbol of their worship, and so shared in the divinity of the sun*” (p. 129).

Tai-me’s characteristics insinuate the chief object of Christian worship: namely, Jesus the Son of God (Heb. 4:14; Matt. 16:16).

179) “*Priests of the sun*” (p. 129).

See reference #119.

180) “*I began my pilgrimage*” (p. 129).

Pilgrimage is one of Scripture’s main themes. God’s people are “*pilgrims on earth*” on their way to the Celestial City (Heb. 11:13 KJV). Celestial City, meaning heaven, is taken from John Bunyan’s classic *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. The people of Israel wonder around as pilgrims before entering the promised land (Exod. 6:4 KJV). The Apostle Peter beseeches Christians to live as pilgrims (1 Pet. 2:11 KJV).

181) *"There the Kiowas paused on their way; they had come to the place where they must change their lives. The sun is at home on the plains. Precisely there does it have the certain character of a god"* (p. 130).

The Kiowas' need and the sun's divine character affirm the power of the Son to change lives: *"He who believes in the Son has eternal life"* (John 3:36; see reference #178).

182) *"There are things in nature which engender an awful quite in the heart of man; Devils Tower is one of them. Man must account for it"* (p. 131).

As man must account for Devils Tower, man must account for sin: *"We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ"; "Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account"* (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 4:8).

183) *"However tenuous their well-being, however much they had suffered and would suffer again, they had found a way out of the wilderness"* (p. 131).

The Kiowas' journey alludes to Israel. Upon escaping slavery in Egypt, the people of Israel wonder in the wilderness for forty years before entering the promised land of Canaan (Num. 32:13; Josh. 1:2). However, this is not the end to their suffering, e.g., the future destruction of Jerusalem (Lam. 1–5).

184) *"'My grandmother had a reverence for the sun, a certain holy regard which now is all but gone out of mankind. There was a wariness in her, an ancient awe. She was a Christian in her later years'"* (p. 132).

Grandmother's reverence for the sun symbolizes her belief in the Son. Momaday again suggests ambiguity, as grandmother, like her grandson Tosamah, is both Kiowa and Christian. See reference #119.

185) *"I remember her most often at prayer. She made long, rambling prayers out of suffering and hope, having seen many things"* (p. 133).

Grandmother's prayers signify Christian ideals. Christians are to seek hope during times of suffering, as the Apostle Paul reasons: *"Exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope"* (Rom. 5:3-4). Christians are also to *"pray without ceasing"* (1 Thess. 5:17).

186) *"He left today. It was raining, and I gave him my coat. You know, I hated to give it up; it was the only one I had"* (p. 139).

Benally's action alludes to a command of Jesus: *"He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none"* (Luke 3:11 KJV). However, Benally has only one coat in his possession rather than two.

187) *"Male deity! / Your offering I make / I have prepared a smoke for you / Restore my feet for me / Restore my legs for me / Restore my body for me / Restore my mind for me / Restore my voice for me"* (p. 147).

Benally's prayer echoes David as recorded in the fifty-first Psalm. David requests of God: *"Restore to me the joy of Your salvation"* (Ps. 51:12). He then mentions sacrifice and offering made unto God, but not one of smoke: *"You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I*

would give it; *You are not pleased with burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit*" (Ps. 51:16-17). For David, an offering made unto God is an offering made unto the God of Scripture and, therefore, unto Jesus, the male deity of the Trinity (see reference #49 and #149). Furthermore, Jesus Himself is the Old Testament Passover sacrifice (1 Cor. 5:7).

188) *"This very day take your spell for me / Your spell remove for me / You have taken it away for me / Far off it has gone / Happily I recover / Happily my interior becomes cool / Happily I go forth"* (p. 147).

Benally's prayer that removes the spell and results in happiness suggests the divine spells and joys of both the Apostle Paul and Job. God sends Paul a tormentor, one which he happily boasts of: *"There was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me...Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me"* (2 Cor. 12:7-9). Job suffers many tribulations, evils that God allows. Upon the tribulations' ceasing: *"The LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold...After this, Job lived 140 years, and saw his sons and his grandsons, four generations. And Job died, an old man and full of days"* (Job 42:10, 16-17).

189) *"In beauty it is finished"* (p. 147).

"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost" (John 19:30 KJV). These are the last words of Jesus before His

sacrifice for human sin is complete. This allusion works well since Benally is praying for the healing of Abel. Jesus heals mankind.

190) “*Jesus scheme*” (p. 149).

The mention of a Jesus scheme implies the focal point of Scripture, namely, the scheme of God in saving His people through Jesus.

191) “*DeBenedictus*” (p. 151).

DeBenedictus refers to the Benedictus, or the Song of Zechariah.¹⁵ Recorded in Luke’s Gospel (1:68-79), the song is Zechariah’s thanksgiving utterance upon the birth of his son, John the Baptist.

192) “*He said his grandfather used to have a bunch of sheep. I herded sheep from the time I would walk*” (p. 154).

This phrase is significant since Abel’s grandfather is named Francisco. His name is derived from Saint Francis of Assisi. Although not a shepherd formally, legend has it that Saint Francis had the ability to talk to animals. The “Legend of Saint Francis & the Wolf of Gubbio” tells how Saint Francis saved the shepherds and sheep of Gubbio from a wolf.¹⁶ Now to allude this to Scripture, of which Saint Francis followed well, Jesus refers to Himself as “*the good shepherd*” (John 10:11, 14). Furthermore, Jesus says, “*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me*” (John 10:24).

¹⁵ Ward, Bernard. “The Benedictus (Canticle of Zachary).” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 2. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907. 20 May 2015 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02473a.htm>>.

¹⁶ “Saint Francis & the Wolf.” *Taming the Wolf Institute*. tamingthewolf.com, n.d. Web. 20 May 2015.

193) *"His mane is made of short rainbows / My horse's ears are made of round corn / My horse's eyes are made of big stars / My horse's head is made of mixed waters...My horse's teeth are made of white shell"* (p. 170).

The son's metaphors of his horse parallel Solomon's song regarding his bride: *"Your eyes are like doves...your hair is like a flock of goats...your teeth are like a flock of newly shorn ewes...your lips are like a scarlet thread...your temples are like a slice of a pomegranate...your neck is like the tower of David"* (Song of Sol. 4:1-4). Many Christian theologians believe Solomon's song, in addition to physical exchanges between a groom and his bride, is also depicting spiritual exchanges between the Son and His bride, the Church.

194) *"From the holy waters—he never knows thirst"* (p. 170).

The holy waters eternally quench the thirst of the son's horse. This attribute resonates with the water offered by the Son: *"Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life"* (John 4:14).

195) *"I am Everlasting and Peaceful"* (p. 171).

Everlasting and peaceful are attributes of the Son. He is peaceful: *"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful"; "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world"* (John 14:27; 16:33). For His everlasting nature see reference #149.

196) *"They don't even know you, but they're friendly anyway; they go out of their way to be nice"* (p. 181).

Benally's description of the city's residents denotes the way in which the people of Israel are to treat strangers: *"The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt"* (Lev. 19:34).

197) *"He didn't come back for three days"* (p. 184).

See reference #100.

198) *"Peter always asked her about the Indians...It was the story Peter liked best of all"* (p. 187).

Peter's endless questions and supreme enjoyment of the story of the young Indian brave alludes to the likeness of Peter, the disciple of Jesus. Peter is known as the curious disciple in that he is known for asking Jesus countless questions. His Jerusalem sermon makes evident that he likes, best of all, the story of Jesus (Acts 2:14-36).

199) *"[Molly] used to tell him the story about a young Indian brave. He was born of a bear and a maiden, she said"* (p. 187).

The birth of the young Indian brave echoes the birth of Jesus. Instead of a bear and a maiden, Jesus is born of a Spirit and a virgin named Mary. Moreover, Molly is a diminutive of Mary, thereby recalling further the image of the Virgin Mary. See reference #41.

200) “*He was noble and wise*” (p. 187).

The young Indian brave’s nobility and wisdom is indicative of Jesus. The God-Man is the noblest of nobles as He is the “*King of Kings*” and “*Lord of Lords*” (1 Tim 6:15; Rev. 17:14; Rev. 19:16). In His youth He amazes all the temple’s teachers with “*His understanding*” of Scripture (Luke 2:47). He then keeps “*increasing in wisdom*” (Luke 2:52).

201) “*He had many adventures*” (p. 187).

The many adventures of the young Indian brave recall the works of Jesus. In addition to all His adventures recorded in Scripture, the Apostle John discloses, “*there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written*” (John 21:25).

202) “*He became a great leader and saved his people*” (p. 187).

The young Indian brave’s eventual role as a great leader for the salvation of his people signifies Jesus’ role on earth. Jesus is the chief cornerstone of God’s household and the “*head of the body, the Church*” (Col. 1:18; Eph. 2:19-20). He came not “*to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many*” (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45). “*He will save His people from their sins*” (Matt. 1:21).

203) “*She always thought of him, Abel, when she told it*” (p. 187).

Molly’s pondering of the suffering Abel, while telling the story of the young Indian brave, has biblical overtones. Cain kills Abel (see reference #111). But “*though he is dead, he still speaks*” (Heb. 11:4). This is made possible “*through faith*” in the “*blood of the Lamb*”

(Heb. 11:4; Rev. 12:11; cf., Rom. 5:9). Hence, if the young Indian brave refers to Jesus, then Molly may be seeing His blood upon Abel and thereby think of him.

204) "*Ei yei! A bear! A bear and a maiden*" (p. 187).

"Ei yei" is an acceptable utterance upon discovering the mysterious incarnation of the Son of God by a virgin and the Holy Spirit (see reference #199). As "*Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?'*" (Luke 1:34).

205) "*There were twelve brothers*" (p. 188).

The people's twelve brothers imply Jacob's sons. The twelve sons of Jacob became the fathers to the twelve tribes of Israel (Gen. 35:22-26).

206) "*Four holy men and four holy women came out to greet her. The women bathed and anointed her; they touched her with corn meal and pollen, and she was beautiful*" (p. 188).

The anointing, bathing and beautification of the Bear Maiden allude to Esther. Before she could go into King Ahasuerus' chamber, she had to complete beautification treatments: "*The days of [her] beautification were completed as follows: six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and the cosmetics for women*" (Esther 2:12). For Christian reference from "anointed" see Scarberry-García.¹⁷

¹⁷ P. 69 of Scarberry-García, Susan. *Landmarks of Healing: A Study of House Made of Dawn*. Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1990. Print.

207) *"She was going to bear a child and was ashamed. And when the child was born she hid it among the leaves. The child was found by the Bear"* (p. 189).

The hiding and discovery of the Bear Maiden's grandson is reminiscent of Moses. Although not ashamed, Moses' mother hides her young child in a wicker basket and places it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. The child is then found by Pharaoh's daughter (Exod. 2:1-10).

208) *"There is no telling of the sun, save for one cold, dim, and even light that lay on every corner of the land and made no shadow"* (p. 193).

The conditions of the town convey the conditions of hell. As described in Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus, one in hell may peer up and see the joys of heaven, the home of the Son (Luke 16:23). However, the Son will not come down to lessen the torments in hell (Luke 16:26).

209)* *"His act of renunciation"* (p. 194).

Father Olguin's act of renunciation refers to his renunciation of his vow of "sacred solitude." However, all Christians practice general renunciation by following their Master's command: *"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me"* (Matt. 16:24).

210)* *"He had done well by the town, after all. He had set an example of piety, and much in the way of good works had accrued to his account"* (p. 194).

As a Roman Catholic priest, Father Olguin is called to live a pious life in order to set an example for his town/parish. The fulfillment of this duty has accumulated many good works to his life's account. According to Roman dogma, it is believed that mankind must accrue many good works in order to enter heaven's gates. Father Olguin is hoping that his good example of piety will earn him a ticket to heaven. He should, however, trust only in the good works of Christ (Gal. 2:16).

211) *"He had been there six days at dawn, listening to his grandfather's voice. The old man Francisco was dying"* (p. 195).

Francisco's voice and the six-day duration of Abel's presence signify God's role in creation. Everything is created by God's voice in six days (Gen 1:31; 2:2; see reference #130 and #131). Abel has listened to the creation of the world, but his grandfather is about to die. This is irony.

212) *"At noon he had fallen into a coma again"* (p. 195).

The time of Francisco's coma suggests the arrival of darkness while Jesus is on the cross: *"When the sixth hour came, darkness fell over the whole land"* (Mark 15:33; cf., Matt. 27:45; Luke 23:44; see reference #78). At noon, Jesus and Francisco are alive, but death is ever near.

213) *"The old man's face was burning, and his lips were cracked and parched. Abel dipped a cloth in water and pressed it gently to his grandfather's mouth"* (p. 196).

Abel's action and Francisco's condition while dying allude to Jesus while on the cross: *"Jesus...said, 'I am thirsty.' A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full*

of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth” (John 19:28-29).

Abel, though, is gentler with his grandfather than the executors are with Jesus.

214) *“The old man had spoken six times in the dawn” (p. 197).*

Francisco’s dying voice refers again to the number of life-giving creation days. See reference #211.

215) *“House of the sun” (p. 197).*

Sun is a homonym of Son (see reference #119). The black mesa is the location of the house of the sun. Heaven is the location of the house of the Son. Momaday’s allusion is ambiguous since Francisco is both Navajo and Christian. Thus, house of the sun is both a Navajo and biblical allusion.

216) *“They must know the long journey of the sun on the black mesa, how it rode in the seasons and the years” (p. 197).*

Francisco’s determination that his grandsons know the journey of the sun alludes to the Son’s earthly narrative (see reference #215). To live life abundantly, mankind must know Jesus and His life’s perfect journey: *“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3; 10:10).*

217) *"They must live according to the sun appearing, for only then could they reckon where they were, where all things were, in time"* (p. 197).

Christians are to live according to the actions of the Son: *"the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked"* (1 John 2:6; see reference #215). Accordingly, without Jesus as guide, mankind cannot reckon where he is in time since *"all things have been created through Him and for Him"* (Col. 1:16; cf., John 1:3).

218) *"But his grandsons knew...the very cycle of the sun and of all the suns that were and were to come"* (p. 198).

The grandsons' knowledge implies knowledge of Jesus, the Son *"who is and who was and who is to come"* (Rev. 1:8; see reference #215).

219) *"The floor was deep and packed with clay and glazed with the blood of animals"* (p. 199).

The condition of the cave's floor signifies the mercy seat in Israel's tabernacle. God commands of the priest: *"Take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with [your] finger on the mercy seat on the east side; also in front of the mercy seat [you] shall sprinkle some of the blood with [your] finger seven times"* (Lev. 16:14). The accumulation of animal blood would have caused a layer of dry and crinkly blood to form over this seat.

220) *"A dead tree had fallen upon a bed of rock"* (p. 200).

Francisco's discovery of a dead tree upon a bed of rock alludes to Jesus' parable of the sower: *"Other seed fell on rocky soil, and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had*

no moisture” (Luke 8:6). The allusion, however, is only partial since the sower’s seeds are alive in the beginning, whereas Momaday’s tree is already dead.

221) *“He was a man then, and smeared with the blood of a bear”* (p. 204).

Francisco’s entrance into manhood through killing a bear resonates with the entrance into Christianity through Christ’s death. For a Navajo to become a man, he must kill a bear and wear its blood. For mankind to become a Christian, he must believe in Jesus’ death and be covered in His blood: *“To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood”*; *“Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel”* (Rev. 1:5; Heb. 12:24). The bear’s death is the gateway to Navajo manhood as Jesus’ death is the gateway to become Christian.

222) *“He gave them strips of the bear’s flesh, which they wrapped around the barrels of their guns”* (p. 204).

If the bear’s death is an allusion to the sacrificial death of Jesus, then Francisco’s giving of the bear’s flesh refers to the partaking of Jesus’ flesh at the Lord’s Table (see reference #24). The men are right to parade the bear’s flesh in remembrance of its sacrifice for Francisco’s manhood and salvation. This suggests further Francisco being both Navajo and Christian.

223) *“Soon the women came with switches, and they spoke to the bear and laid switches to its hide”* (p. 204).

If the bear alludes to Jesus, then the women speaking to the bear alludes to Christians speaking to Jesus in prayer (2 Cor. 12:8; see reference #175).

224) *"The next year he healed a child who had been sick from birth"* (p. 208).

Francisco's healing of a child who had been sick from birth parallels Jesus' healing of a man who had been *"blind from birth"* (John 9:1).

225) *"There was nothing"* (p. 209).

Abel's depiction of his surroundings recalls Tosamah's depiction of Genesis' account of the beginning (see reference #129).

226) *"It was a while still before the dawn, before the first light should break in advance of the seventh dawn"* (p. 209).

The dawn of Francisco's death is reminiscent of the final day of creation: *"By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done"* (Gen. 2:2). Before the seventh dawn God completes his life-giving work. Likewise, before the seventh dawn Francisco completes his life, thereby fulfilling his Christian destiny.

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